

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Horace Greeley to Abraham Lincoln [With Endorsement by Lincoln]¹, July 18, 1864

¹ Greeley, the influential editor of the New York *Tribune*, had written Lincoln on July 7 (*q. v.*), urging him to meet with representatives of Jefferson Davis. Greeley's letter was prompted by assurances he had received from a dubious intermediary that such representatives were in Canada, at Niagara Falls, awaiting the opportunity to negotiate a peace. Greeley had stressed the importance he attached to this opening, and Lincoln's apparently enthusiastic response outlined the terms that would make negotiations possible. Lincoln had reason to believe, however, that Davis would not consent to terms "embracing the restoration of the Union and abandonment of slavery." In this letter from Greeley, the possible futility of the enterprise begins to become apparent. See William C. Jewett to Horace Greeley, July 5, 1864; Greeley to Lincoln, July 10, 13, 1864; Lincoln to Greeley, July 9, 1864; John Hay to Lincoln, July 16, 1864; Lincoln to John Hay July 16, 1864; and Lincoln to Whom It May Concern, July 18, 1864.

By Independent Telegraph Line

Niagara Falls July 18th 1864

I have Communicated with the Gentlemen in question & do not find them so empowered as I was previously assured they Say that——

We are however in the confidential employment of our Government & entirely familiar with its wishes & opinion on that Subject & we feel authorized to declare if the Circumstances disclosed in this Correspondence were Communicated to Richmond we would at once be invested with the authority to which your letter refers or other Gentlemen clothed with full power would immediately be sent to Washington with the view of hastening a Consumation So much to be desired & terminating at the earliest possible moment the Calamities of war we respectfully Solicit through your intervention a Safe Conduct to Washington & thence by any route which may be designated to Richmond——

Such is the more material portion of the Gentlemens letter. I will transmit the entire Correspondence if desired. awaiting your further instructions I remain

Yours

Horace Greely

Answer by Ind Telegh Line

[Endorsed by Lincoln:]

H. Greeley

Niagara Cor,